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Unlocking the mobile market through data-over-audio

This week's egtabite explores *Proximity Marketing*, an advertising phenomenon that made headlines throughout 2014 and potentially unlocks the growing mobile adspend sector for innovative radio broadcasters.

Brands are increasingly relying on beacon technology, such as Apple's iBeacon, BLE or Bluetooth devices, to distribute advertising content to people within a very precise geographical location, such as a shopping mall or sports stadium. However, this egtabite features a new technology called *audio beacons*, developed by the start-up LISNR, which uses data-over-audio to activate the delivery of contextually-relevant content and advertising messages. A series of pilot campaigns by LISNR for major brands such as Sony, Pepsi, Mondelēz International, AT&T, Budweiser and the Dallas Cowboys caught the attention of the press and generated over \$1.2 million in revenues for the company over the course of 2014.



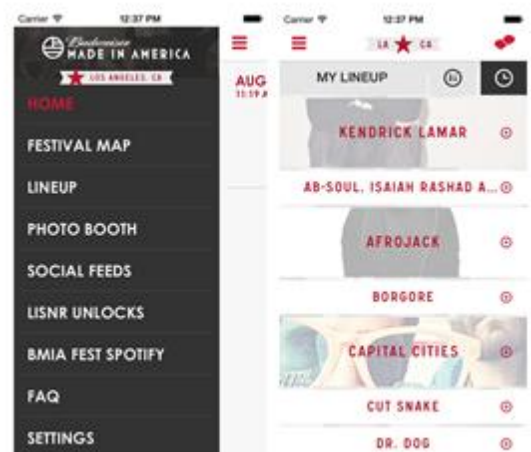
Concretely, data in the form of an ultrasonic audio tone is transmitted via loudspeakers or embedded into digital audio content, and this data triggers a suitably equipped connected devices within close proximity to download content, such as advertising or promotional materials.

Why is this of interest to radio companies?

Although this could be considered a form of audio advertising – albeit undetectable by the human ear – it is valid to ask why radio marketers should be interested. The answer lies on the one hand in the way listeners are increasingly consuming audio content on connected devices and on the other in the relationship between radio stations and their audiences.

The long-established model of radio advertising is all about the use of audio messages to activate response. Traditionally, the radio spot has been used to activate some form of human activity, for instance to visit a store, consider a particular car brand or switch insurance provider. Under this new model, an ultrasonic audio spot effectively activates a connected device, which in turn prompts its human user to take action, such as download a promotional coupon.

Smartphones and tablets are becoming ubiquitous, and they accompany consumers wherever they go, whether to the shops, to live music events or to sports matches. With many radio broadcasters hosting large or smaller scale music events, a real-time contextual advertising platform offers an exceptionally powerful way for sponsors and other event partners to engage with consumers. They can thereby generate significant traffic to their own online properties and drive purchasing interactions. Furthermore, many radio stations have live sport at their heart, with a powerful presence during football matches and other events, matching loyal listeners with

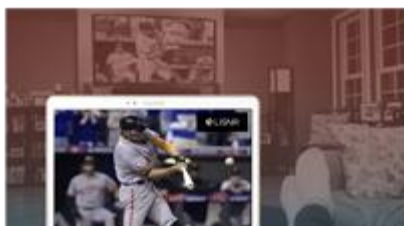


brand fans in an environment that clearly offers great opportunities to interact.

How does it work?

In simple terms, an inaudible audio tone is embedded into digital media or broadcast over the loudspeakers at events such as concerts, music festivals or sports matches. This tone carries data which, when received by LISNR's app or third-party apps that are equipped with the technology, push digital content to the individual's connected device. The application's technology works in the background, alerting users when content is delivered.

An example of advertising delivery comes from the *Budweiser Made in America* music festival. Budweiser's festival app delivered useful information to attendees who had downloaded it, based on their exact location. As they approached concession stands, for instance, they would receive discounts, and close to the exit they received reminders from taxi firm Uber. It proved very popular with users, with over 90% engagement.



In an illustration of additional content, audio smart tones were used to push close-up video of home run hits at Major League Baseball games to attendees in the stadium, using the facility's public address system. People received this content in real-time, synchronised precisely to events happening on the field of play.

The technology is also applicable to broadcast television or radio, opening new possibilities for second-screen interactivity for both media.

Why does this matter to egta members?

To be clear, the use of audio beacons and other proximity marketing technologies is well beyond the scope of most classical radio advertising and sponsorship campaigns. However, this opportunity to help brands engage with consumers in real-time, and in highly relevant contexts, offers broadcasters and their commercial departments an exciting and innovative way to deliver content and messages via a second device and to enhance the value of their activities around sporting events or their own concerts and festivals.

Just as clients have invested in Shazam-enabled radio advertising in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and elsewhere, audio beacons could be one of the keys to unlocking mobile adspend for the radio industry.



Background info

Please click on the links below to access the relevant documents:

- » **Newspaper articles with additional information** (please click here and here)
- » **An audio recognition initiative by Facebook** (please click here)